

Message Text

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42

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 SAM-01 SAJ-01 CIAE-00 COME-00

EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

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INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

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AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

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USMISSION USNATO BRUSSELS

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UNCLAS MADRID 3407

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TAGS: PINT, SP

SUBJECT: CONTINUEDPRESS REACION TO ARIAS' SPEECH

REF: MADRID 3379

1. AS "ABC" (MONARCHIST) NOTES EDITORIALY, THE REACTION TO PRIME MINISTER ARIAS' SPEECH CONTIUES DIVIDED, WITH THE MAIN OPPOSITION TO IT COMING FROM THE POLITICAL LEFT. THE OPPOSITION FINDS ARIAS' SPEECH NOTABLY LACKING IN ANY HINT OF DESIRING COLLABORATION " IN THE TRANSCENDANT TASK OF DEMOCRATIC REFORM."

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2. "EL ALCAZAR" (NATIONAL VETERANS CONFEDERATION) HEADLINED

ITS LEAD EDITORIAL ON THE SPEECH "CONTINUITY AND REFORM" AND APPLAUDED ARIAS' LINKING OF THE TWO THEMES. IT CONSIDERED THE TABLING OF A SPECIFIC CALENDAR OF REFORM A POSITIVE STEP FORWARD IN THE PURSUIT OF SOCIAL JUSTICE.

3. "ARRIBA" (NATIONAL MOVEMENT) LIKEWISE STRESSED THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC -- RATHER THAN THE POLITICAL -- ASPECTS OF ARIAS' SPEECH, AGREEING THAT IT IS IN THESE SPHERES THAT THE MAJOR IRRITANTS OF SOCIETY ARE TO BE FOUND. SPECIFICALLY, THE GOVT MUST TAKE "DRASTIC" STEPS TO REMEDY THE PROBLEMS OF UNEMPLOYMENT AND POVERTY. "ARRIBA'S " LEAD COMMUNIST, FERNANDO ONEGA, CONSIDERED THAT IN GENERAL ARIAS' PROGRAM AND CALENDAR OF REFORM WERE ACCEPTED BUT THAT RESERVE WAS FELT AT THE "GENERAL TONE OF THE DISCOURSE." ONEGA FELT THAT THE TONE WAS DUE TO ARIAS' DESIRE TO SPEAK FOR THE MAJORITY OF THE COUNTRY, FOR THOSE WHO STILL TRAVEL TO FRANCO'S TOMB IN THE VALLEY OF THE FALLEN, FOR THOSE WHO DESIRE "SLOW AND CAUTIOUS CHANGE."

4. IN "YA" (CATHOLIC INDEPENDENT) AN ARTICLE BY THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC-ORIENTED GROUP "TACITO" SAID THAT FOR REFORM TO BE A SOLUTION IT MUST OFFER THE RESULT OF A "TRULY DEMOCRATIC REGIME," IF IT IS TO BE SINCERE REFORM AND NOT JUST A METHOD OF MAINTAINING THE CONTINUITY OF INSTITUTIONS INADEQUATE FOR THE PRESENT. IN PARTICULAR, IF THE CORPORATE, NON-DEMOCRATICALLY CONSTITUTED UPPER HOUSE SHOULD END UP WITH THE SAME OR GREATER POWERS THAN THE REPRESENTATIVE LOWER HOUSE, THEN AUTHENTIC REFORM WILL NOT HAVE BEEN ACHIEVED, AND IT WAS PRECISELY THIS THEME WHICH WAS NOT ELUCIDATED IN ARIAS' SPEECH.

5. AMCONGEN BARCELONA REPORTS THAT IN GENERAL THE CATALAN PRESS IS REACTING MORE STRONGLY TO THE SPEECH THAN HAS THE MADRID PRESS. IN PARTICULAR, THE PRESTIGIOUS "LA VANGUARDIA" SAID THAT IF THE CALENDAR OF REFORM WAS NEW, ARIAS' TONE, STYLE AND POLITICAL POSITION WERE THE SAME AS ALWAYS. THERE WERE IN ARIAS' SPEECH, AS IN THAT OF INTERIOR MINISTER FRAGA A WEEK EARLIER IN BARCELONA, "ABUNDANT POLEMICAL ASPECTS, IN A TONE HARSH TOWARDS THE LEADERS OF THE OPPOSITION." PRIVATELY, HOWEVER, OPPOSITION UNCLASSIFIED

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LEADERS CONTACTED IN BARCELONA AREA, WHILE CRITICIZING OVERALL TONE AND CONTENT OF ARIAS' SPEECH, ACKNOWLEDGE THAT IT REPRESENTS A STEP FORWARD IN ADVANCING THE GOVT'S REFORM PROGRAM. A NUMBER OF PRESS COMMENTATORS HAVE MADE THE SAME POINT.

6. THE DAY FOLLOWING ARIAS' SPEECH, THE PARLIAMENTARY AD HOC COMMITTEE APPOINTED TO REPORT ON THE DRAFT LAW ON

POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS ANNOUNCED THAT IT HAD TERMINATED ITS
WORK. THE CORTES MAY INDEED BE STEPPING UP THE PACE OF ITS
WORK SO THAT KEY LEGISLATION CAN BE ADOPTED ON TIME TO
PROVIDE LEGAL GUARANTEES FOR THE INCREASED PACE OF POLITICAL
ACTIVITY ANTICIPATED PRIOR TO THE REFERENDUM ANNOUNCED FOR
OCTOBER IN ARIAS' SPEECH. AS "ABC" HAS NOTED, THE
GENERAL REACTION OF THE VARIOUS PARLIAMENTARY GROUPS HAS
BEEN POSITIVE.

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